



CONFLICT MITIGATION

Students Learn to Live in Peace

Five Kosovar secondary school students returned from a study tour in the US focused on the theme of living in peace in a multiethnic society. The students were winners of a High School Peace and Tolerance Essay Competition and visited a public school and an all-girls Catholic high school in the US.



Getting ready for the US study tour - winners of the Peace and Tolerance competition

"When I return to Kosovo for peace-building, I will say I've seen that it's possible to live together regardless of race, ethnicity, and gender," said Milos Adjanic, a Kosovo Serb student and one of the five contest winners during an interview in US. "I will say that I have returned from a county where this concept works."

Adjanic and others are students from high schools in northern Kosovo which have partnered with USAID's Youth Supporting the Future activity, which provides grants for several student initiatives, including science cabinets, bio-chemistry labs, vocational workshops for machinery and crafts, English language cabinets, and school computer and internet centers. The grants have already benefited 2,673 Kosovo students. The US Study tour was funded through USAID's Focusing on Results Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition activity.

Making Connections for Media Professionals

On November 2, the USAID-supported Media Assistance Project hosted the second keynote dialogue for Kosovo Serb and Albanian media professionals.

The purpose of the dialogues is to bring together journalists from different ethnic backgrounds - mainly Albanian and Serb - to discuss ways they can work together. The first dialogue took place in May 2007 and brought together senior media managers and editors, many of whom had worked together before the war and already had good professional relationships. The second dialogue featured 14 younger journalists and broadcasters (seven Albanians and seven Serbs), few of whom spoke each others' languages. They identified obstacles to working together and how they can overcome them. Milan Joksimovic of Link Production said, "It's not so much whether you speak in Serbian or Albanian, it's how you use the language that counts, whether it brings you closer together or splits you apart. The important thing is not to use hate speech."

The young journalists discussed ways in which they can share sources from various ethnic groups they do not usually have access to and how they can offer different perspectives to each others' work. The dialogue was facilitated by Dr. Sheila Ramsey, an advisor in USAID's media project.

RULE OF LAW

Kosovo's Main Judicial and Legal Associations Commit to Fighting Corruption

In early October, the USAID-supported American Bar Association Rule of Law program launched an initiative to promote judicial integrity in Kosovo.

The initiative brought together the three main professional associations of the judicial and legal system - the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates (KCA), the Kosovo Judges Association (KJA), and the Kosovo Prosecutors Association (KPA) - to draft a "Strategy for a Transparent and Non-Corrupt Judicial System."

Guest speaker Honorable Judge John M. Walker, Jr., Senior Judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and a board member of the CEELI Institute, noted several factors that contribute to corruption worldwide. "The lack of transparency, low salaries, lack of well-trained judges on legal practices, and lack of clear rules and lines of responsibilities are additional circumstances for corruption," he said.

The presidents of all three associations emphasized the importance of this initiative and pledged their commitment to fighting corruption in the justice sector. USAID's Kosovo Civil Society Project has also been instrumental in developing a strategy to fight corruption in the judiciary. The Civil Society project is implemented by IREX in partnership with the Advocacy Training & Resource Center.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Cold Chain Handling and Development Training

USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support project is offering three training sessions in post-harvest cold chain handling and development to fruits and vegetables farmers throughout Kosovo.

The training builds upon previous consultations provided by USAID on using refrigeration equipment to ensure superior quality frozen foods, and is designed to help avoid costly mistakes that can occur in equipment set-up. The training provides a thorough discussion of the principles of freezing and refrigeration systems; raw material handling and freezing techniques for fruits and vegetables; packing and storage of frozen foods; and technology and information essential to the frozen food industry. Trainings are led by a fruit and vegetable post-harvest food technology specialist.

The first course took place on October 31 at the Agroprodukt Commerce Company, and the remaining will take place at the Scardus Company and Qingjat e Sharrit Cooperative in Shterpce/Strpce (mid-November) and AS Promet in Leposavic/q (mid-December).

USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support Project is a four-year business development project focusing on developing the dairy, fruits and vegetables, and construction clusters.

Energy Sector Trainings Launched

On November 5, Dr. Michael Farbman, Mission Director of USAID/Kosovo, opened a 4-day training course on Energy Regulation and Tariff Development. The training was designed to promote dialogue and share information among major stakeholders on energy regulation, strategy development, and implementation. The first day of the training provided general information to a wider audience, while the rest of the course targeted energy sector specialists heavily engaged in the decision-making process of energy regulation and tariff development. Topics included principles of market-based economic and energy regulation, policy and legislation, supporting institutions, the role of decision-makers, and sector-specific technical approaches, case studies, methodologies and applications.

The training is part of USAID's assistance to Kosovo's energy sector in partnership with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and the Energy Regulators Regional Association (ERRA).

Upcoming Events

November 20 - Dr. Michael Farbman, USAID Director will speak at the startup of "Mozaik", the first multilingual kindergarten.

November 21 - USAID/Kosovo will honor participants of the Professional Development Program and Leadership Program, part of the previous Economic Development Initiative project.

November 27 - Dr. Michael Farbman, USAID Director will open the cold storage chamber in Leposavic.



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